MU professor Mary Glazier leads student researchers into real-world projects

BY CHAD UMBLE

Mary Glazier is an academic who isn’t content to only work in academia.

As professor of sociology at Millersville University and director of its Center for Public Scholarship and Social Change, Glazier coordinates classroom research projects that have real-world applications.

Among the community groups that have used research produced by her students is SoWe, which is leading a revitalization effort in southwest Lancaster, and Ambassadors for Hope, which serves children with a parent in prison.

Glazier says sociological research can and should inform social policy, so she finds research areas that have practical applications.

“I think that’s been meaningful to students to see they can be associated with actual change,” she says.


Current town: Rural Manor Township.

My family consists of: Husband, Penn; son, James. We also share our home with two dogs, five cats and five horses.

Why you went into academia: One of my college professors said that it was a good profession for a woman because it offered enough flexibility to combine family and career, which motivated me to go to graduate school in sociology. I found that I really liked interacting with students and that it offered an opportunity to make a career of continuing to learn.

What are some misconceptions about college students: Some people assume that college students party hard and do little academic work. The majority of Millersville University students work hard to succeed academically and to support themselves financially while in school. The majority are far more responsible than most people realize.

Advice you’d give to someone just starting college: Start with a focus on something that interests you, but be open to new areas of study. Enjoy the opportunity to see things in a new light.

Advice you’d give to someone just about to graduate from college: Don’t go to graduate or professional school until you have worked first. Those work experiences will provide you with the foundation you need to excel and insight into what kind of advanced degree, if any, you need.

Hobbies: Horseback riding competitions, cycling, doing things with our dogs, working out.

What you usually eat for breakfast: Steel-cut oats with walnuts, brown sugar and fruit, plus tea brewed in an English teapot.

How you take your coffee: Black.

First job: In a department store wrapping packages at Christmas.

How much that first job paid: $1.10 per hour.